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# Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

*Provisional*

**6766**th meeting

Monday, 7 May 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Mehdiyev | (Azerbaijan) |
| *Members*: | China | Mr. Yang Tao |
| | Colombia | Mr. Osorio |
| | France | Mr. Bonne |
| | Germany | Mr. Wittig |
| | Guatemala | Ms. Bolaños Pérez |
| | India | Mr. Kumar |
| | Morocco | Mr. Loulichki |
| | Pakistan | Mr. Tarar |
| | Portugal | Mr. Moraes Cabral |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Zhukov |
| | South Africa | Mr. Sangqu |
| | Togo | Mr. Menan |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Parham |
| | United States of America | Mr. DeLaurentis |

## Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Special report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Guinea-Bissau**

**Special report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280)**

**The President**: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Angola and Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the participation at this meeting of the Minister of External Relations of Angola and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Economic Community of West African States, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/280, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mutaboba.

**Mr. Mutaboba:** It is a privilege for me to introduce to the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280), dated 30 April 2012. The following are the main highlights of the situation on the ground and at the international level since the report was compiled following the 12 April 2012 coup d'état.

At the national level, the release of Interim President Raimundo Pereira and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior on 27 April met a key precondition of the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) for participation in any talks. Notwithstanding, while the Secretary of State for Former Combatants, Brigadier General Fodé Cassamá, was also released on 28 April, it is important to note that several Government officials are still seeking refuge in diplomatic compounds in Bissau or are still in hiding. It is therefore critical to work towards improving current security conditions to ensure the safe return of those officials and facilitate the restoration of constitutional order in the country.

While the PAIGC is facing internal divisions, with 35 members suspended for questioning the credibility of the party's leader, Carlos Gomes Júnior, the party continues to call for the full restoration of constitutional order with the reinstatement of the constitutionally elected civilian authorities. The National Anti-Coup Front, led by the former security sector reform (SSR) adviser to late President Malam Bacai Sanhá and leader of the Solidarity and Labour Party, Iancuba Djola N'Djai, has condemned the coup and called for, first, the immediate restoration of constitutional order and the release of all detainees; second, the end of the persecution of Government leaders and looting of public property; third, the reinstatement of the PAIGC Government elected in the 2008 elections; fourth, the deployment of a United Nations-mandated stabilization force to provide security to State institutions and to facilitate the implementation of the SSR programme; fifthly, the fight against impunity and drug trafficking; sixth, the imposition of individual sanctions on the coup leaders and their prosecution; and seventh, the conclusion of the electoral process.

As negotiations towards finding a solution to the crisis continue, the needs of the population of Guinea-Bissau have been set aside. As a result of the political crisis, the payment of civil servants' salaries has been delayed in the absence of a Government, and the cashew trading season, which is crucial to the economy and livelihood of the population, has been disrupted. Food security assessments conducted by the World Food Programme to measure the impact of the current situation on the household food security in the regions

of Oio, Quinara, Gabú, Bafatá and Cacheu have indicated that cashew nuts are being traded at a lower price — 150 to 200 CFA francs per kilogram — than the agreed price, which is 250 CFA francs per kilogram. In addition, barter trade has increased in the absence of cash flow. This is seriously affecting the revenue of the population relying on this main export product and their ability to earn a living or to survive.

In the face of the quickly evolving crisis, the United Nations on the ground has continued to mobilize efforts to ensure a swift and peaceful return to constitutional order. To this end, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) has met with the military junta on a number of occasions to underscore the need to return the country to constitutional rule, release detained officials and complete the electoral process.

Following the Security Council's issuance of its presidential statement of 21 April (S/PRST/2012/15), my office met with the leadership of the military junta to hand over a copy of the presidential statement and to enquire about what steps the junta planned to take to comply with the statement. The junta indicated that it was engaging in negotiations with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) aimed at arriving at a solution to the crisis. During the meeting, it agreed to grant access to the United Nations to visit the detainees, and that visit took place on 26 April 2012.

I also consulted with the PAIGC, opposition parties and civil society organizations to ascertain their various positions regarding the coup and to encourage their participation in the ECOWAS-led mediation process. Overall, the coup is unpopular in the country, especially within the population and in the former freedom fighters' association. There is mounting anxiety, particularly around the fact that the longer a solution to the crisis is delayed, the more severe the social and economic consequences. In addition, human rights violations, including restriction on freedom of expression and on peaceful assembly, intimidation and arbitrary arrest, continue unabated.

The UNIOGBIS Human Rights Section has met on a regular basis to analyse the impact of the coup d'état on the human rights situation in the country. The Section monitors the situation in detention centres and has called on the military authorities to respect the detainees' human rights. The United Nations Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group has also conducted an assessment of the humanitarian situation in the aftermath of the 12 April coup and reviewed the United Nations inter-agency contingency plan. The assessment concluded that the situation is not critical for the moment.

I also held a series of regular discussions with international partners based in Bissau to echo the Council's call for a common and coordinated voice and action in addressing the ongoing political crisis. In order to ensure the effective sharing of information, as well as mutual support among international partners and the harmonization of efforts, international partners in Bissau agreed to the creation of a crisis contact group, including ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the United Nations and possibly the European Union (EU) as a major development partner, under the chairmanship of UNIOGBIS. The first formal meeting of the group will be convened on my return to Bissau.

At the regional level, ECOWAS has continued to lead the mediation process aimed at facilitating the peaceful restoration of constitutional order. In this regard, the Gambia, on behalf of the ECOWAS regional contact and follow-up group, convened a meeting of Guinea-Bissau stakeholders in Banjul on 29 April. The meeting was attended by representatives of Guinea-Bissau, including the military junta, the PAIGC, the forum of opposition political parties, the five candidates contesting the results of the first round of the presidential elections, as well as the inter-faith facilitation group that, prior to the coup, had attempted to mediate a solution for the completion of the electoral process.

During the meeting, the regional contact and follow-up group proposed the following solutions: first, taking immediate measures to restore constitutional order; second, putting in place a 12-month transitional period for the revision of the Constitution and the electoral law, the implementation of the national security sector reform programme, and other reforms to prepare the ground for new elections aimed at choosing a president during the transition; third, reinstalling Mr. Raimundo Pereira as the Interim President; fourth, appointing a consensual Prime Minister vested with full powers to lead a broad-based Government during the transition; fifth, granting the interior and defence portfolios to the military junta; sixth, extending the National Assembly's mandate until

the end of the transition; and seventh, deploying an ECOWAS force to provide security for the departure of the Angolan mission in order to guarantee security during the transitional period and to assist in the implementation of SSR within the scope of the ECOWAS/CPLP road map in support of national SSR strategies.

Although the ECOWAS summit held in Abidjan on 26 April started on a positive footing, leading to the release of the Interim President and the Prime Minister, the talks in Banjul on 29 April stalled when parties disagreed on key issues, such as who should be the Interim President. In addition, the proposals put forward by the regional contact group included measures that could be challenged as not meeting the ECOWAS zero tolerance principle and the Security Council's call for the restoration of constitutional order. This is particularly true in the case of its decision that the military junta should take the defence and interior portfolios in the transitional Government.

There is also a lack of clarity on what the completion of the election process means in practical terms. The armed forces spokesperson has argued that the military junta was fully compliant with ECOWAS requirements and that the only point of difference was the question of the interim presidency. The PAIGC, on the other hand, insisted that a solution had to be based on a sole premise, namely, respect for constitutional and democratic legality. For the PAIGC, which did not participate in the negotiations on the ground, restoring constitutional normalcy means the unconditional release of all detainees, the return of power to the legitimate civilian authorities — that is, the Interim President, the Prime Minister and the Government — and the conclusion of the 18 March 2012 electoral process.

On 3 May, I attended an extraordinary summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on Guinea-Bissau, in Dakar. In their final communiqué, ECOWAS leaders reaffirmed their zero tolerance principle for coups in the subregion and confirmed their previous decision to deploy a contingent of the ECOWAS Standby Force to Guinea-Bissau, though no timeline was given. The communiqué also established a 12-month transitional period in the country, during which the following measures would be taken with the assistance of ECOWAS: first, a review of Guinea-Bissau's legal texts, including the country's Constitution and electoral code; and secondly, reforms in the defence and security sectors and other reforms aimed at preparing the ground for the holding of fresh elections to choose a President by the end of the transition.

They also recommended that, first, the National Assembly renew its leadership through a vote, following which the elected Speaker of the National Assembly should assume the responsibility of Interim President and the elected Deputy Speaker become the Speaker of the National Assembly; secondly, a consensual Prime Minister with full powers be designated to lead a broad-based Government that should lead the transition to its conclusion; thirdly, the Interim President and the transitional Prime Minister not be eligible to contest the envisaged presidential election; and the tenure of the membership of the National Assembly be extended through appropriate mechanisms to cover the transitional period. In addition, ECOWAS leaders directed the ECOWAS Commission to seek the assistance of the African Union, the United Nations and the international community in implementing these measures. They also decided to maintain the sanctions imposed on the military junta until such time that all the protagonists accept the modalities for a return to constitutional order.

Meanwhile, the EU has imposed targeted sanctions on six members of the military junta, including travel bans and the freezing of assets. For its part, the CPLP issued a resolution on 5 May demanding, inter alia, the reinstatement of the Interim President and the Prime Minister, and the conclusion of the electoral process that was disrupted by the 12 April coup d'état. It also called on the Security Council to impose targeted sanctions on the military and civilians involved in the coup, and reiterated its support for the establishment of a United Nations-mandated stabilization force in Guinea-Bissau comprising troops from ECOWAS, the CPLP and the African Union.

The main parties to the mediation process led by ECOWAS are the military junta and political parties, including the PAIGC, which formed the constitutionally elected Government prior to the 12 April coup. The PAIGC argues that all parties should not be on the same footing in the negotiations and that account needs to be taken of the results of the 2008 legislative elections.

In a document entitled "Memorandum on the Management of the Politico-Military Crisis in Guinea-Bissau advocated by ECOWAS", which was issued on 2 May, the Permanent Commission of the PAIGC Political Bureau expressed some reservations about the ECOWAS decisions. In particular, the PAIGC stressed the importance of maintaining the policy of zero tolerance regarding the 12 April coup d'état, and expressed its determination not to participate in a transitional organ that would explicitly or implicitly legitimate the coup or give credence to the coup leaders. The PAIGC also pointed out the ECOWAS decisions that were viewed as unconstitutional, including the appointment of members of the military junta as Ministers of Interior and Defence, whereas Guinea-Bissau's Constitution states that the armed forces and its active members cannot undertake any political activity.

In another memorandum issued on 5 May, the Political Bureau reiterated its earlier messages and rejected the ECOWAS proposal to extend the mandate of the National Assembly beyond November 2012. The Political Bureau stressed that it would instruct its parliamentary group not to take part in any process that would not respect the approved rules for the functioning of Parliament.

Allow me to conclude by making the following key points.

First, I would like to reaffirm the United Nations strong condemnation of the unconstitutional seizure of power by the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau. I also underscore the importance of United Nations support for the ECOWAS-led mediation process, which should aim at ensuring the restoration of constitutional rule in the country in compliance with Guinea-Bissau's Constitution.

Secondly, in the light of the divisions in Guinea-Bissau, including within and between the political and military groupings in the country, any sustainable solution to the current political crisis must be one that is inclusive of all national stakeholders. In that connection, I will continue to work with national actors to foster inclusive dialogue among segments of Guinea-Bissau's society, aimed at arriving at a consensual solution to the current crisis.

Thirdly, the continued delay in the return to normalcy in Guinea-Bissau is negatively impacting on the innocent citizens of the country who want to see a speedy resolution of the crisis. In that regard, the Council may wish to consider the imposition of targeted measures against those who continue to impede the return to constitutional order in the country.

Finally, the international community cannot afford to be divided in its engagement in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, it is essential that all international partners — in particular the African Union, the CPLP, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations — agree on a joint international response to facilitate the peaceful restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. I would like to assure the Council that I will continue to engage with international stakeholders with a view to achieving that objective.

**The President**: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mamadú Saliu Djaló Pires, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Pires** (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to congratulate you and your country, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of Security Council for the month of May.

I would like to thank all the members of the Council for once again giving me an opportunity, within a three-week period, to participate in the Council on behalf of legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Minister of External Relations of Angola on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Chair of Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Guinea Bissau.

In the light of the most recent developments in the current political and military situation — namely, the conclusions from the regional ministerial contact group meeting held in Banjul on 29 April and the final communiqué of the extraordinary meeting of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Summit that took place in Dakar on 3 May — the legitimate

authorities of Guinea-Bissau take this opportunity to once again acknowledge and thank ECOWAS for its efforts to find a just solution to the crisis caused by the military coup of 12 April.

We are pleased with the solid positions taken by the Security Council, the African Union, ECOWAS, the CPLP, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which vehemently condemned the military coup and considered the application of sanctions against its organizers. We are also overjoyed by the freeing of President Raimundo Pereira, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior and other politicians who had been held under military custody. However, we would like to alert the international community, and the Security Council in particular, that atrocities continue to be committed by the organizers of the coup d'état and their supporters, both in the capital and in the interior of the country.

For example, many members of the Government, party leaders, regional governors, individuals linked to the interim President and the Prime Minister, representatives of the judiciary, including its President, the President of the National Electoral Commission and some of the primary collaborators are still in hiding since the coup on 12 April, many of them in diplomatic representations in Bissau.

Peaceful rallies continue to be forbidden by the military, and are violently dispersed when they are organized.

Assaults and theft of cattle continue to occur in Bissau and in the countryside, with no one to protect the civilian victims from organized criminal groups.

The funds of many public institutions are being pillaged by military elements, without a minimal observance of legal and administrative procedures.

The largest party in the Bissau-Guinean Parliament has been practically leaderless since 12 April, with its leadership in hiding due to persecution and threats from the illegitimate military power.

The home of the Prime Minister and candidate for the second round of presidential elections, which was bombed and destroyed by the military, continues to be pillaged in spite of supposedly being guarded by the military.

The legitimate authorities of Guinea-Bissau are concerned about the mechanism adopted by ECOWAS to implement the zero-tolerance principle vis-à-vis coups d'état, as detailed in the final communiqué of the 3 May extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government. In truth, the recommended solution of ECOWAS could be, in practice, an ineffective modality to resolve the current political and military crisis, possibly leading to the aggravation and postponement of the problems the country is facing. Objectively, it also legitimizes the coup d'état by not endorsing the continuation of the electoral process for the second round of voting, nor the return of the legitimate authorities who are supposed to serve until 11 April.

Indeed, the endorsement of the election of a new bureau for the National Popular Assembly and the recommendation to organize a transitional Government with the political parties reinforces that view. Therefore, in our view, the solution recommended by ECOWAS seems to encourage coups d'état in Africa, in particular in Guinea-Bissau, instead of combating them.

In that context, the legitimate authorities of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau are of the view that the mechanism adopted by ECOWAS to implement its zero-tolerance principle against coups d'état, by distancing the country's democratically elected Interim President and the Prime Minister, does not observe the principle of the return to constitutional order demanded by the international community, namely, by the Council through its presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/15) and by the main political and civilian actors in Guinea-Bissau. The ECOWAS position on this is also a long way from those held by other segments of the international community, in particular the African Union, the European Union, the IOF and the United Nations.

For those reasons, the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau reiterates to the Council its determination to fulfil the requests contained in the Council's presidential statement of 21 April and reaffirmed by the international community, considering the following as necessary conditions, sine qua non, for an immediate restoration of constitutional order and democratic legitimacy, in accordance with Guinea-Bissau's constitutional framework.

Those are, first, the restitution of effective power to the democratically elected leaders who were serving

the people up until 11 April, namely, the Interim President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly.

Secondly, a multinational force should be dispatched, based on the willing cooperation and involvement of various international organizations, including ECOWAS, the African Union, the CPLP and the United Nations. Such a force should be mandated to ensure the protection of the Government's leaders and institutions and the civil authorities, as well as the holding of the second round of presidential and legislative elections by the end of this year.

Thirdly, the electoral process should be continued through the holding of the second round of presidential elections interrupted by the military coup of 12 April.

Fourthly, the current military leadership must be immediately removed from their posts in the Guinean armed forces for their role in initiating all the military uprisings in Guinea-Bissau during the past 14 years.

Fifthly, the armed forces should be reformed as outlined in the proposed security sector reform, to which the international force should actively contribute by helping to create the necessary conditions for its implementation and for the establishment of a democratic, republican military.

Sixthly, sanctions should be imposed on the coup leaders and their associates. Finally, criminal charges should be brought against the leaders and their associates for the grave economic and social effects of the coup resulting from the acts of vandalism and the pillaging of businesses and private residences perpetrated during the disruption of constitutional order. Our position is supported by the majority of public opinion in the country, including the PAIGC and its members of Parliament and all the parties that make up the national anti-coup movement, the Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League and the trade unions.

**The President**: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Georges Rebelo Chikoti, Minister of External Relations of Angola, speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

**Mr. Chikoti** (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation)*: I am addressing the Council on behalf of the States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP): Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste and my own country, Angola, which is currently president of the Community.

In response to the coup d'état in Guinea-Bissau, the international community has in recent weeks proposed initiatives seeking a solution that will safeguard the dignity of the Guinean people and restore their legitimate right to a normal life and to peace, justice, freedom and development. In that regard, two weeks ago I had the honour to take part in a meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.6755) convened by the President for that month, the United States of America, in which we had the opportunity to discuss Guinea-Bissau. Today, we are again taking measures to find an acceptable solution that satisfies the international community.

The CPLP and its member States remain deeply concerned over developments in the country. We have adopted two resolutions on Guinea-Bissau, most recently on 5 May, reaffirming that the only authorities in Guinea-Bissau recognized by the CPLP are those that derive their authority from constitutional and democratic legitimacy, and giving full support to the view expressed by the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau following the conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Dakar on 3 May.

Despite the international community's firm condemnation of the coup d'état and its demands for the restoration of the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau, there have been no results so far that can ensure the restoration of constitutional normality. We welcome the release of the Government officials jailed after the military coup, including Interim President Raimundo Pereira and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior, and we call for the release of the remaining detainees following the coup. We believe that the Guinean people cannot consider themselves free so long as they do not enjoy all their political and civilian rights, both within and outside Guinea-Bissau.

The CPLP welcomes the position taken by the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which strongly condemns the coup d'état, and calls on the Security Council to make every effort to immediately restore the constitutional order, to reinstate the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau and to conclude the electoral process. The

CPLP also appeals to the Security Council to impose targeted sanctions on the military personnel and civilians involved in the coup d'état, and expresses its support for the sanctions recently adopted by the European Union and those also planned by ECOWAS.

At this time, the most important task of the international community, under the leadership of the Security Council, is to implement appropriate mechanisms for the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the request of the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau for the establishment and deployment of a comprehensive stabilization force, comprising staff of member countries of ECOWAS, the CPLP and the African Union, under a Security Council mandate.

The Council should therefore urgently deliberate such a proposal, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and establish a mission mandate that will safeguard the constitutional order, protect the country's institutions, legal authorities and people, ensure the completion of the electoral process and the implementation of the defence and security sector reform, and, last but not least, effectively combat drug trafficking and its related impunity.

The CPLP and its member States are ready to make a genuine contribution to that initiative, as it is the best option among the ongoing efforts to resolve the crisis and — as the most comprehensive and multilateral solution to be received by the political and social forces and people of Guinea-Bissau — offers the best guarantee of success.

Following the establishment of the Angolan technical and military assistance mission, which was fully committed to achieving a bilateral solution to the necessary defence and security sector reform, and after it was deemed impossible to implement the tripartite memorandum of understanding between the Government of Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS and the CPLP, as provided for in the road map for reform, we believe that it is time for a multilateral approach to support the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau, under the auspices of the Security Council. That seems to be the way to help that country.

We propose the urgent establishment of a crisis contact group for Guinea-Bissau, coordinated by the United Nations, as mentioned in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280), with the participation of representatives of the African Union, ECOWAS and the CPLP.

In conclusion, allow me to draw the Council's attention to the terrible scourge of illicit drugs and arms trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, as well as other less prevalent but equally serious trafficking. We believe that the expressed intention of the country's legitimate Government to combat drug trafficking was a key reason for the coup d'état. The international community is therefore being challenged to mobilize in that fight, which is of concern to everyone as it affects us all, causing irreparable damage to and destroying the country's political cohesion and social and moral well-being, and making it important to strengthen support for the ECOWAS plan to fight drug trafficking, in particular in West Africa.

Finally, allow me to alert the Council and the international community to the serious humanitarian situation emerging in Guinea-Bissau, in particular those of internally displaced persons and refugees and the risk of an epidemic, which require a response and appropriate action of the international community. We cannot delay such a response to Guinea-Bissau's needs.

I am grateful for attention of the Council and the invitation to the CPLP to address it.

**The President**: I now give the floor to Ambassador Viotti.

**Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti**: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely meeting and for inviting me to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Mamadú Saliu Djaló Pires, and of the Minister of External Relations of Angola and Chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), His Excellency Mr. Georges Chikoti. I also welcome Ms. Salamatu Souleiman, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his briefing and for his valuable work as Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

From the outset, the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission has strongly

condemned the forcible seizure of power from the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau. It is worth noting that the international community also condemned the coup d'état in unison. The message was clear — the constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau must be restored and all those who are illegally detained must be released as a matter of urgency. We believe that the unity of all international partners of Guinea-Bissau behind such a strong message will contribute to the resumption of the democratic process and to convincing the perpetrators of the coup d'état to withdraw to the barracks, allowing for the return of civilian rule.

By condemning the coup d'état, we also made it clear that all national stakeholders should resolve their disputes through political dialogue, never by the use of force. The first step to further national reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau should be respect for the rule of law and the restoration of the constitutional order. The active engagement and coordination of the various international partners, especially regional organizations, should be sustained. The recent release of the Interim President and the Prime Minister is an important development, and should be seen as an opportunity to maintain the momentum and lead to the restoration of the rule of law.

At this juncture, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to coordinate our efforts and speak with a single voice, underscoring that the international community will not, under any circumstances, tolerate the unconstitutional seizure of power. The United Nations, the African Union, the CPLP and ECOWAS should continue to cooperate and mutually reinforce each other's efforts. We commend the notable role of regional organizations in discussing solutions to the crisis and in underlining that the overthrow of a democratic Government shall not be accepted by those committed to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. Now it is time to seek convergence and align our actions with the purpose of rendering them as effective as possible.

The Peacebuilding Commission is committed to helping Guinea-Bissau to implement the necessary reforms to achieve political stability and further its social and economic development. As I had the opportunity to stress in my previous statements before the Council, tangible results were obtained in the fields of institution-building, economic recovery and financial management. Let me also reiterate that the country was in the process of conducting democratic elections and that the first round had a significant turnout and was considered credible and transparent by international observers. The coup d'état represented a serious blow to the democratic will of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I refer once and again to those gains to emphasize that the engagement of the United Nations and of the Peacebuilding Commission with Guinea-Bissau was paying off. Despite all of the difficulties of a country affected by years of conflict, Guinea-Bissau had started, with the cooperation of the international community, to create a positive trend that would establish a virtuous cycle of political stability and economic development.

I therefore echo the call made by Special Representative Mutaboba that all international partners — the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the CPLP and the European Union — must stand united in their efforts to assist Guinea-Bissau at today's critical juncture. To maintain the firm engagement of the international community with Guinea-Bissau, it is crucial that the constitutional order be restored. I reaffirm that the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission is ready to continue to engage in those efforts.

**The President**: I thank Ambassador Viotti for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Suleiman.

**Ms. Suleiman**: I would like, first of all, to convey to you, Mr. President, warm greetings from the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, Mr. Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, whom I am honoured to represent at today's important meeting of the Security Council.

The several meetings convened by the Council in recent weeks to deliberate on the situation in Guinea-Bissau bear witness to the importance that the Council and the Secretary-General attach to the issues of peace and security in West Africa. I wish therefore to express the gratitude of the heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States and the ECOWAS Commission for the support that the Council and the Secretary-General have given to the subregion in its efforts to stabilize the peace and security environment.

As I thank you, Sir, for your excellent stewardship of today's proceedings, I would also like to acknowledge the speakers who took the floor before me, in particular, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, as well as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, the Minister of External Affairs of Angola, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), and the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

For years now, Guinea-Bissau has stood as a major challenge in the ECOWAS space. The permanent stand-off between the over-politicized military and the perpetually bickering political class runs the risk of transforming a beautiful country with great potential into a virtual failed State. That trend cannot be allowed to continue.

Since 19 April, the last time it briefed the Security Council (see S/PV.6754), ECOWAS has intensified its efforts aimed at pushing for the speedy restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, but with mixed results. At yet another Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in Abidjan on 26 April, which previous speakers have referred to, the Summit denounced the agreement between the military command and the 26 fringe parties to establish a so-called national transitional council to rule the country for two years. Instead, the ECOWAS Summit demanded the establishment of a 12-month transition in Guinea-Bissau that would culminate in the holding of a presidential election. The Summit also instructed the Commission to deploy the ECOWAS Standby Force in the country to, among other duties, secure the withdrawal of the Angolan Technical and Military Assistance Mission in Guinea-Bissau, secure the proposed transition and commence work on the implementation of the road map for defence and security sector reform in the country.

The heads of State adopted a series of targeted sanctions on the military command and its associates, along with diplomatic, economic and financial sanctions on the country, if the junta failed to accept ECOWAS demands within 72 hours. A regional contact group, with Nigeria as Chair and comprising Benin, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Senegal and Togo, was also established to follow up on the Summit's decisions.

In a major breakthrough in the crisis, ECOWAS succeeded, on 27 April, in securing the release of both the Interim President, Mr. Raimundo Pereira, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, who had been in detention since the 12 April coup d'état. On 29 April, as was mentioned earlier, the regional contact group held extensive consultations in Banjul with the principal stakeholders in the crisis — lasting more than 12 hours — on the modalities for the transition. The interlocutors included the military command, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the group of five presidential candidates in the aborted election, the group of 26 fringe parties allied with the junta and interfaith groups for the promotion of dialogue. However, the consultations failed to yield the desired results, principally because of the intransigence of the junta and its political allies. Therefore, targeted and general sanctions came into effect at midnight on 29 April.

The ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit held in Dakar on 3 May further consolidated the regional position on the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The Summit provided further details on the proposed 12-month transition, the highlight of which was the proposal to reconvene the National Assembly, elect a new leadership through a vote and make the Speaker so elected the new Interim President. A consensual Prime Minister with full powers would then be appointed to head a transitional Government. The tasks of the transitional authority would include, inter alia, overseeing a review of the relevant legal texts, namely, the Constitution and the electoral code, economic reform, reform of the defence and security sector, a national dialogue and the conduct of a presidential election.

On Friday, 4 May, the Chairman of the Authority dispatched an ECOWAS mission to Guinea-Bissau, led by Nigeria, the Chair of the regional contact group, for yet another round of discussions with the stakeholders. At those discussions, the junta, the PAIGC, the five presidential candidates, members of civil society, interfaith groups and the political parties were present. In the consultations, the proposals put forward by ECOWAS were met by the stakeholders with broad acceptance, even though some of the interlocutors called for a joint technical team to review and harmonize the proposals with the provisions of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau. ECOWAS believes that

progress is being made and that a solution will soon be found in that direction.

In adopting the strategy for the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS was informed by its awareness of the seriousness and complexity of the situation in the country. Against that background, sacrifices and compromises must necessarily be made by all stakeholders. The constitutional order that existed prior to the coup d'état cannot be restored immediately, as the PAIGC is demanding, if civil war is to be avoided in the country. Nor will ECOWAS or any international authority accept the proposals of the junta and its allies seeking a two-year transition period, because that would be tantamount to rewarding the coup plotters. A compromise is therefore needed. In proposing a transition through the National Assembly, ECOWAS is aware that the overthrown Government of the PAIGC controls 63 per cent of the seats in the Assembly and would have a major say in determining who eventually emerges as Interim President.

Even as ECOWAS is working hard to find a peaceful solution to the constitutional crisis, the planning element of the ECOWAS Standby Force has maintained regular contact with the Bissau-Guinean army on the modalities for the deployment of the ECOWAS Force, which is imminent. In those endeavours, ECOWAS has worked, and will continue to work, in close cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations and other partners, whose support will greatly enhance the achievement of the set objectives of the re-establishment of the rule of law and the maintenance of peace and security in Guinea-Bissau.

ECOWAS is acutely aware that the implementation of the decisions of the subregion's heads of State and Government will require resolve as well as the continued understanding and support of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Security Council and the international community at large. ECOWAS will definitely need financial, technical and logistical support, particularly for the deployment of the Standby Force. Work on the details of the support required is at an advanced stage and will be made available to all partners as soon as possible.

The initiatives taken by ECOWAS are aimed at helping the Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau, because ECOWAS, as a regional body, is aware of the country's problems and hopes, through dialogue, to undertake a thorough review of the country's political and military system, with a view to transforming the country into a responsible member of the international community and an agent for international peace and security, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The political paralysis and the drug culture, to which earlier speakers have referred, in Guinea-Bissau today symbolize the fragility that threatens the subregion's efforts to entrench democratic culture and promote growth and development; it also threatens international peace and security. The international community has a responsibility and an opportunity to transform that situation, and the time to do so is now.

**The President:** There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*